

Message Text

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SUBJ: GOP FREES IMPRISONED LABOR LEADER AND LAWYERS

REF: LIMA 3530

1. WEEKEND PRESS REVEALED RELEASE OF LABOR LAWYERS GENARO LEDESMA IZQUIETA AND ARTURO SALAS RODRIGUEZ WHO HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED SINCE DECEMBER 1975 FOR ALLEGED "LABOR AGITATION". ALSO RELEASED WAS MINE UNION LEADER VICTOR CUADROS PAREDES. STILL DETAINED ARE LAWYERS RICARDO DIAZ CHAVEZ AND JOSE ONA MICONO ALONG WITH UNION LEADER HERNAN CUENTAS, BUT LABOR SOURCES EXPECT THEM TO BE RELEASED SHORTLY.

2. THE ONLY EXPLANATION FOR RELEASE OF PRISONERS PUBLISHED THUS FAR HAS BEEN THE APRIL 24 LETTER OF GENARO LEDESMA TO THE PRESS. LEDESMA CLAIMED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS STUDIED HIS CASE, CONCLUDING THAT HE WAS NOT ENGAGED IN AGITATION BUT HAD BEEN CARRYING OUT HIS LEGITIMATE FUNCTION AS UNION LEGAL ADVISOR. ACCORDING TO LEDESMA, MINISTER OF INTERIOR CISNEROS APOLOGIZED TO HIM IN THE NAME OF THE GOP AND STATED THAT "WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE MISTAKES". IN HIS LETTER LEDESMA CLAIMS TO HAVE A COMMITMENT FROM THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR TO REVIEW THE DECREE LAW DECLARING AN EMERGENCY IN THE MINING SECTOR WHICH LEDESMA TERMS "A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVOCATION TO STRIKE". LEDESMA ALSO DEMANDED THAT THE GOP

CEASE ITS "PERSECUTION" OF THE DIRECTOR AND EDITOR OF LEFTIST WEEKLY MARKA. THE LABOR LAWYER ATTRIBUTED HIS RELEASE TO EFFORTS OF FAR-LEFT LABOR CENTRAL CCUSC, TO PUBLIC OPINION, AND TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

3. COMMENT: THE TOUGH GOP LABOR POLICY EXEMPLIFIED IN THE RECENT DECREE IN MINING SECTOR IS COMBINED WITH GOVERNMENT PROMISE TO ENGAGE IN "DIALOGUE" WITH TRADE UNIONS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE GRIEVANCE. PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ HAS RECENTLY MET WITH COMMUNIST CGTP LABOR CONFEDERATION AND WITH THE COMMUNIST METALLURGICAL FEDERATION (FETIMP), WHICH HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO THE LABOR MINISTER. LAST WEEK MORALES BERMUDEZ MET WITH TOYOTA WORKERS WHO HAD BEEN ON STRIKE ALMOST TWO MONTHS. FOLLOWING THE MEETING IN WHICH PRESIDENT MAY HAVE USED BOTH THREATS AND PROMISES, TOYOTA WORKERS RETURNED TO THEIR JOBS.

4. RELEASE OF LAWYERS AND PROMINENT UNION LEADER MAY RELATE TO GOP'S "DUALISTIC" LABOR POLICY. GOP MAY HAVE EXTRACTED PROMISE OF GOOD BEHAVIOR FROM THOSE RELEASED IN RETURN FOR SYMPATHETIC REVIEW OF MINE DECREE LAW. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE AND DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION (BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT WERE CRITICAL) PRODDLED THE GOP INTO RELEASING THESE MEN AGAINST WHOM NO FORMAL CHARGES WERE BROUGHT. IN THIS REGARD EMBASSY NOTES RENEWED SPECULATION THAT PROMINENT EDITOR AND JOURNALIST ENRIQUE ZILERI MAY SOON BE ALLOWED TO RETURN FROM ARGENTINA. THE DECISION PERMITTING HIS RETURN (AND PRESUMABLY DROPPING CHARGES AGAINST HIM) WOULD SEEM TO BE CLOSELY RELATED TO THAT INVOLVING TH IMPRISONED LAWYERS. THE GOP IN ITS SECOND PHASE IS APPARENTLY MORE COGNIZANT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS IMAGE AS A REGIME WHICH IS NOT REPRESSIVE AND WHICH RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS.
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